

to drink water rather than wine, to sleep on the ground oftener than on a bed. In some cases they submitted to corporal cruelty, being scourged and loaded with chains. The converse error here appeared, for they made a display of their powers of endurance.<sup>1</sup> The moral gymnastics could be best practiced in solitary life. Many philosophers urged their disciples to leave home and to practice elsewhere, — in another town or in loneliness.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the third century the ascetic party, in spite of the withdrawal of the puritans, was very powerful. The ascetic sentiment was stimulated and was spreading on account of the ideas of neoplatonism, the increasing confusion in the Christian body, the excitement and anxiety of a period of social decline, and finally on account of the need to provide other means of expending the passionate love of God which had formerly driven Christians to martyrdom. When the church became a religion recognized by the state there was no more martyrdom. A similar tendency marked the sects of philosophy at the same time. The author of the *Letters on Virginity* ascribed to Clement (about 300 A.D.) is a strong admirer of celibacy. He has heard of shameless Christian men and women who consort, eat, drink, gossip, slander, and visit each other, although unmarried persons. The ascetics were forced to separate themselves entirely from the rest. They wandered, praying and preaching and casting out devils, having no means. The motives of asceticism were the apprehension of the end of the world, enthusiasm, dualistic philosophy, fear of sensuality, and gnostic doctrines. In 300 A.D. the ascetics were corrupt and needed more complete isolation

(monasticism).<sup>3</sup> In the fourth century an ascetic life, instead of a form of life for Christians inside the church, came to be thought of as an independent form of life. It was thought of as a "philosophy" most closely related to Cynicism. In externals Cynics and Christian ascetics were alike. The coarse garments and uncut hair gave them the same appearance.<sup>4</sup> In the fourth century the ethics of Paul were abandoned by Christians. The average Christians

<sup>1</sup> Hatch, *Griechenthum und Christenthum*, 108. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>3</sup> Harnack, *Pseudo-Clement. Briefe de Virg*<sup>^</sup> 19, 21, 22. <sup>4</sup> Hatch, 122.